CONSUMER TIME

LUNCH AT SCHOOL

NETWORK: NBC DATE: September 8, 1945

ORIGIN: WRC TIME: 12:15-12:30 PM - EWT

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL

2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER

4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. And today, we're going to tell a story that goes right to the heart of your home and to the heart of your family. On this September day, as the school bells are already sounding faintly in the air...on this September day we are going to hear...a school lunch story!

5. SOUND: SNEAKS IN SOFTLY ON ABOVE. BRING UP IN PAUSE. COUNTRY SCHOOL BELLS CLANGING, JOINED BY BUZZING BELLS OF CITY SCHOOLS. FADE DOWN AND OUT.

6. CHILDREN: (CHANTING DELIBERATELY) Two times two is four; four times four is sixteen; sixteen times sixteen is...(STOP SHORT)

7. MARY LOU: (ALONE...CONFUSED) I don't know. What is sixteen times sixteen?

8. TEACHER: Mary Lou...that's the third time in a row you've missed that question.

9. MARY LOU: But nobody can multiply sixteen times sixteen in his head.

10. CHILDREN: (SAME DELIBERATENESS) Two hundred and fifty-six!

11. TEACHER: There, Mary Lou...do you see?

12. MARY LOU: (MURMUR) I had an idea it was something like that.

13. TEACHER: (BRUSKLY) "Something like that" won't do in this class. We must have accuracy.

14. CHILDREN: "Something like that" won't do in this class, Mary Lou! (CLASS TITTERS BEHIND)

15. MARY LOU: (WAILING) Oh you stop that...all of you! Stop making fun of me...stop it, I tell you!

16. CHILDREN: (CHANTING MOCKINGLY)
What is the matter with Mary Lou?
She can't add even two and two!
Teacher's mad as she can be...
But she can't add even three and three!
(BEGIN TO FADE ON THIS)
I'll bet her pa would skin'er alive...
If he knew she couldn't add five and five.
(LOSING THIS ON CROSS FADE OF SOUND)
What is the matter with Mary Lou?

17. SOUND: BELLS AGAIN, SAME AS ABOVE...BRIEFLY, AND OUT.

18. JOHN: I don't know...what do you suppose is the matter with Mary Lou?

19. TEACHER: (SHE IS KIND OF BRISK CHARACTER) I can answer that question. I'm the teacher. I know my children and I know their families. Mary Lou isn't the only one. Most of them aren't doing well at all.

20. JOHN: My goodness...aren't you being a little harsh?

21. TEACHER: Not at all! Because I know what's the matter with the children in this school...and I know what to do about it.

22. CHILDREN: (DERISIVE LAUGHTER, ETC. BACKGROUND)

23. TEACHER: Be quiet! Quiet, I say!

24. CHILDREN: She says she knows what to do about it!

25. BOY: (PROJECTING MOCKING) "She knows what to do about it". Do you know what that is? She wants to make us eat spinach and carrots for lunch..

26. GIRL: And drink milk!

27. BOY: And eat custard pudding...instead of soda pop and cherry fizz.

28. MARY LOU: (LILTING) I like cherry smash best of anything...and popcorn and pickles and peppermint candy. That's my favorite lunch.

29. BOY: Mine too, Mary Lou!

30. CHILDREN: Mine too! Ours too! So there!

31. BOY: (SHOUTING OFF) In fact I'm hungry now! Let's go get something to eat!

32. CHILDREN: LAUGH AND CHATTER OFF.

33. TEACHER: See what I mean! They're all problem children, every one of them.

34. JOHN: (CHUCKLE) Well, it sure looks as though you have your hands full, all right! But...is it true what they said, Miss Lewis, that you want to give them hot lunches at school?

35. TEACHER: Of course it's true! That is the only thing that will do any good. They're undernourished and that makes them dull and lazy.

36. JOHN: But if they won't eat hot lunches...if they prefer pickles and soda pop...

37. TEACHER: You talk like half the people in this town! Of course they'll eat it...if it's there to eat!

38. JOHN: But how...how would you cook it? How would you get the food?

39. TEACHER: Hmph! Other schools do it! Why couldn't we?

40. JOHN: But how do other schools do it?

41. TEACHER: I'll tell you what they do! I'll tell you! The citizens association and the PTA and other groups get together and plan a school lunch program for their community...(FADING SLIGHTLY)...

42. MAN: (FILTER) So the Resolutions Committee has spoken to the Ways and Means Committee which got together with the Action Committee...

43. WOMAN: (FILTER) And we decided...

44. MAN: (FILTER) That it would be perfectly possible to have a school lunch program in our school!

45. WOMAN: (FILTER) That is if everybody contributes.

46. JOHN: Contributes? What do they mean...money?

47. TEACHER: Not necessarily that! But they contribute food...and cooking utensils, and many other things...(SLIGHT FADE)

48. MAN: (FILTER) If the meeting will come to order, I'll read the list.

Mrs. Hattie Brown...one frying pan.

Mrs. Elsie Uluhan...fourteen jars of community canned tomatoes.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Smythe...one stove...two bushels of potatoes.

Mrs. Oscar Overholser...kitchen utensils.

(FADING SLOWLY...BUT CLEAR)

Mrs. George Felts...15 quarts of canned string beans.

Mrs. Henry Jones...ETC...OUT BY THIS TIME...

49. JOHN: Dear, dear, what generosity.

50. TEACHER: Not extraordinary at all. These people want healthy children, and they want bright children.

51. JOHN: And a hot lunch will do it?

52. TEACHER: It will go a long way toward doing it.

53. JOHN: Well, after they all contribute this stuff, who cooks it?

54. TEACHER: Some schools can afford to hire a cook...or often, the mothers take turns.

55. WOMAN: (FILTER) Mrs. Overholser will cook on Monday and Wednesday this week. Mrs. Smythe Tuesday and Thursday. I'll take Friday,

56. MAN: (FILTER) George Felts and I will whitewash the school basement which will be the lunchroom, and Harry will install the stove.

57. WOMAN: (FILTER) And we'll all pitch in to paint the tables and chairs.

58. MAN: (FILTER) George said he'll donate the ice.

59. WOMAN: (FILTER) And as for washing the dishes...well, the teacher will have the children take turns doing that.

60. MAN: (FILTER) If all goes according to schedule...we ought to have this thing working by a week from Monday.

BREATH PAUSE:

61. JOHN: So that's the way a school lunch program runs...sort of a community affair.

62. TEACHER: Why it's practically entirely a community affair.

63. JOHN: Then why not this community?

64. TEACHER: That's what I'm thinking. They just need to be told, that's all.

65. JOHN: Has to be brought home to 'em, eh?

66. TEACHER: (BUILDING) I've a great mind to give every child an F in deportment and an F in spelling, and an F in arithmetic and geography...

67. JOHN: All of 'em.

68. TEACHER: All of them!

69. JOHN: (SPECULATING...AS THE IDEA DAWNS) Then the parents would all come around to see you one day...they'd come in a body... they'd be so angry...

70. TEACHER: (LOW AND TENSE) Yes...and when they all are standing there together in my classroom...waving their children's report cards at me...and demanding to know why Johnny and Ellie and Susy and Mary Lou got such bad marks in everything. When they would demand to know that, I would get up...maybe I'd stand on a chair...and I'd say...(BREATH PAUSE...THEN LOUD PROJECTING) All right! You've asked me and I'm going to tell you straight from the shoulder.

Those children...your own children...simply aren't getting enough to eat.

The pitiful little paper-bag lunches of soggy cucumber sandwiches, a few grapes...a piece of dry cake. Oh, I've seen those lunches all right!

How can you expect a child to learn anything when he's sleepy and dull all afternoon. How can you expect him to have good manners...when he's hungry and nervous and undernourished!

(M O R E)

TEACHER (CONT) What do you think your child is going to buy for lunch... when you simply give him money? Do you know what he buys? Candy and pop...and things called snowballs, which are simply crushed ice with pink and green flavoring poured over it. Your children won't be healthy, happy children...until we all get together...until we have a hot lunch program in this school! Good hot lunches of fresh vegetables and meat... and a glass of milk for every child...(FADING) And a hot bowl of soup, and nourishing...(CUT BEFORE END)

71. SOUND: CROSS FADE...BELLS AGAIN...TOLLING ONES ONLY...FADE DOWN FAINTLY BEHIND AND CUT.

72. MARY LOU: (LOW AND POLITELY) Bobby, will you please pass me the bread.

73. BOBBY: (EXTRAVANGANTLY POLITE) Certainly, Mary Lou.

74. MARY LOU: I don't mean to be personal, Bobby, but are you actually eating your carrots?

75. BOBBY: (LOW) I don't want to start anything right now, Mary Lou, but will you please mind your own business.

76. MARY LOU: I just thought you didn't like carrots, that's all.

77. BOBBY: You don't have to gabble on about it. If these happen to be good carrots, and I happen to like them...what do you care.

78. MARY LOU: Oh it isn't that I care, only you never eat...

79. BOBBY: Is that milk you're drinking, Mary Lou...real cow's milk? I thought you wouldn't drink milk.

80. MARY LOU: (QUIETLY) Be still, Bobby. Teacher's looking at you.

81. BOBBY: Oh no she isn't, she's looking at you.

82. TEACHER: Mary Lou, it's your turn to help with the dishes today.

83. BOBBY: (SOTTO) See! I told you.

84. MARY LOU: Don't be silly, I like to wash dishes. And don't pretend you don't like to carry the wood for the stove, either. Because you do. I heard you say you did.

85. BOBBY: All right, so I do. So what?

86. TEACHER: The girls will gather the trays, now and take them to the kitchen. Mary Lou, will you come here, please.

87. MARY LOU: Yes ma'am.

88. TEACHER: Did you enjoy your hot lunch today?

89. MARY LOU: Oh yes, Miss Lewis...I enjoy it every day.

90. TEACHER: I kind of thought you did...the way you eat everything on your plate. From now on I'm going to give a gold star to every child who eats everything on his plate. And at the end of the year...whoever has the most gold stars, wins a prize.

91. MARY LOU: Oh my, Miss Lewis...that'll be wonderful. I'll bet I'll win! I just know I will...(FADE) I know it...

PAUSE:

92. TEACHER: Yes, it's amazing what a good hot lunch in the middle of the day will do.

93. JOHN: And isn't there such a thing as getting help from the Government on school lunches? I mean don't they pay part, if you apply for it?

94. TEACHER: Yes, the Department of Agriculture helps out...when there's a need, and they pay up to nine cents toward the cost of the lunch for every child.

95. JOHN: That's a big help, isn't it.

96. TEACHER: Yes...and another help is...that when the Department buys up certain foods to support the market price...they make them available for the schools that have lunch programs.

97. JOHN: And in that way, there's a real important use found for these Government foods...they're going to make happier, healthier, stronger children!

98. TEACHER: Yes...you see it works out all around. Now there are three types of lunches we get Federal aid for. Type A is the full meal.

99. JOHN: You mean with meat, potatoes and everything.

100. TEACHER: Yes...and milk included. For every Type A lunch, the school gets up to nine cents from the Government.

101. JOHN: Then there's a type B?

102. TEACHER: Yes, that's generally the same meal but the food is in smaller quantities. It's a sort of supplementary lunch, and the school gets six cents a meal reimbursement. Type C lunch is simply the milk, and the Government gives two cents for every half pint of milk served.

103. JOHN: Well, that ought to be a big help.

104. TEACHER: Oh, I should say it is. But even though the Government does help, a school lunch program is mainly a community affair...supported by the home folks, and the school board or the PTA, and various civic clubs.

105. JOHN: And the kids really appreciate it.

106. TEACHER: In their own individual way, they do. (THOUGHTFULLY) Yes, I really believe they do.

BREATH PAUSE:

107. BOY: At first, I must admit...
We didn't approve of it.

108. MARY LOU: We didn't want milk or potatoes or bread...
When we could have candy instead.
(BREATH PAUSE)
Can you blame us?

109. CLASS: (SHOUTS) Yes, we blame us!

110. GIRL: You should see us now, though, we're very polite...
I don't know why we're that way...quite...

111. BOY: (TAKES DEEP BREATH) Unless it's because tables with checkered tablecloths and plates and glasses here in the basement sort of make it seem like eating out!

112. TEACHER: Yes, that's why you're polite, no doubt!

113. BOY: Well, I've gained four pounds.

114. GIRL: And I've gained two and a half.

115. BOY: And you should hear about Mary Lou...if you want to laugh.

116. CLASS: For there's nothing the matter with Mary Lou. She's a lot smarter.

117. BOY: And fatter too!
She can do long division...
With the greatest precision.

118. GIRL: And she knows 12 times 16...

119. MARY LOU: (VERY LOUD...PROJECTING) Are one hundred and ninety-two!

PAUSE:

120. TEACHER: So you see, Johnny...how it is?

121. JOHN: (CHUCKLE) I should say so. But frankly now, do you really notice that the kids make better marks.

122. TEACHER: Oh, of course I do. You know, these lunches actually make up one-third of their daily food requirements. And it's done the parents of this community more good too.

123. JOHN: How's that?

124. TEACHER: Well, they're having a lot of fun, working together on the project. I mean, the mothers can more food at the community canning center to contribute to the school lunches... and the fathers have planted bigger victory gardens too.

125. JOHN: Well now you know, I'm sure that many of our CONSUMER TIME listeners are sitting there at their radios waiting breathlessly for the answer to my next question.

126. TEACHER: What would that be?

127. JOHN: How can a community get a lunch program started, and how do you get Federal aid?

128. TEACHER: Well, first, the thing to do is get in touch with the local school authorities to see if anything is being done about school lunches. If not...then get together with other parents and present the idea to the PTA and other civic organizations.

129. JOHN: Yes, I see...

130. TEACHER: And about getting help from the Department of Agriculture... well, there's a federal school lunch representative in every state, and he'll be glad to work out the details with your group.

131. JOHN: And then, of course, we will be glad to give further details to anyone who writes to CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D.C. That's CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D. C.

132. SOUND: BELLS AGAIN

133. JOHN: Next week on CONSUMER TIME, we're going to hear a story somewhat like today's...but instead of talking about lunch for kids at school, we're going to tell about how the big industries of America serve meals to workers on the job.

134. FREYMAN: That's going to be a very interesting story right now, Johnny.

135. JOHN: Indeed it is, Mrs. Freyman...with the country's big war plants reconverting to peacetime production...

136. FREYMAN: So be with us then, next Saturday to hear another edition of...,

137. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

138. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!

139. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER.

140. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C. This broadcast period for CONSUMER TIME has been made available as a public service.

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